

Californians For Drug-Free Schools



9/8/2004

To: California Performance Review Task force

Subj: School Participation in Non-Punitive Random Drug Testing could save \$7 to \$8 billion per annum

Columbia University's National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) completed a research project in 2001 called Shoveling Up: The Impact of Substance Abuse on State Budgets. Joseph Califano, Jr., former Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare is Chairman of CASA, and his comments are contained in the booklet along with a summary of California, showing that 16% of the State budget (\$11 billion in 1998, probably \$16 billion today) is spent on substance abuse, of which only 1% is spent of prevention, and the balance on the wreckage to our society. ***This is horrible economics.***

52,000 people die annually in America due to substance abuse. The vast majority have something in common. They got hooked on tobacco, alcohol and other drugs between age 12 and 15. Roughly 2,000 people die each month from drug-induced causes. It's the 22 million that didn't die, 9.4% of the population over 12 years old, that cause society the problem and cost each American over \$1,000 per annum. **Nothing in modern history has caused so much death and destruction as drugs.** While we mourn the loss of 1,000 soldiers in Iraq in 18 months, we overlook the fact that many people died last week from substance abuse..

If we want to solve society's problem of substance abuse, we have to stop the problem where it starts, with school age children. Science says parents are number one followed by school environment as to the cause of at-risk behavior. Schools however are number one in terms of the solution, since problems originating at home will not be solved at home without outside interference. Too often that comes when the kid is already in jail, in the emergency room, or the morgue.

The answer is to do what works. Random drug testing cut drug use in the work place, military and private schools by 67% to 90%. Its use in schools for those engaged in athletics and extra curricular activities was approved by the Supreme Court in 2002, which could cover 80% of the students. Non-punitive random drug testing is the answer to keeping kids off drugs and getting teachers and parents working together, and keeping kids in the system until they arrive at adulthood intact. It works. It can cost as little as \$1 per student, which is cheap insurance. President Bush has included \$25 million in this 2005 budget to pay for it.

The Supreme Court held that the health and safety of a child is much more important than a child's right to privacy. Children are physiologically much more susceptible to harm and addiction, so the endeavor is to defer their use of tobacco, alcohol and other drugs until they are adults, when science says they should never have a problem. Hopefully at that point they will have the cognitive skills to make good choices.

Non-punitive random drug screening programs implemented by schools could cut substance abuse in half, and save \$7 to \$8 billion per annum in Justice, Education, Health, Child/Family Assistance and Mental Health. Investing a major part of those savings back to schools for more teachers, higher pay, better facilities, et. al., could solve the budget short fall all schools face, enrich our society and save the pain and anguish of all those who are addicted to drugs, or those mothers and fathers who watch their children die or destroy their lives such as my friend John Weiman, whose testimony is one the cover of your booklet.

I personally lost to stepchildren to drug addiction at age 12 and 14, and have had two nephews die at an early age because of drugs. My network of associates consists of the best drug prevention experts in the Country. We are collectively available as volunteers to help the State and/or Office of Education shape a policy and program that will serve as a model for all states in reducing substance abuse.

Roger D. Morgan